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CHINA: Foreign Minister's Trip Still On

Beijing's decision to send Foreign Minister Qian Qichen on a long-scheduled visit to Ecuador, Cuba, and the US despite his apparent sympathy for party moderates is an effort to give the appearance of business as usual. Qian, who left Beijing yesterday, told reporters he will stress that China's diplomatic ties and open-door policy remain unchanged. In Ecuador, Qian will deliver a speech on China's relations with Latin American countries, according to press reports. His visit to Havana will be the first by a Chinese foreign minister in 30 years.

Qian has been friendly to the US and will highlight the positive aspects of US-China relations while reiterating a strong warning that China will not tolerate interference in its domestic concerns. Qian also will probably reassure US officials that Beijing continues to place priority on good ties to Washington.

Qian's speech in Ecuador and his stop in Cuba further Beijing's efforts to expand political and commercial links to Latin America.

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